

# New River Valley Vision 2020

Prepared by the  
New River Valley Planning District Commission

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Office of Economic Adjustment

April, 1995

## Acknowledgments

Vision 2020 has been made possible by the concentrated efforts of numerous New River Valley residents. Contributors include local government officials, members of nonprofit organizations, teachers, ministers, business and community leaders, and many other citizens committed to the future of the New River Valley.

Report development was guided by a Steering Committee that contributed many hours of hard work, and a large debt of gratitude is due them. The Steering Committee members were: Robert Asbury, Brecc Avellar, Peter Balsamo, Edwin Barnes, Harold "Chip" Batton, Jack Beason, Joe Davis, Linda DiYorio, Don Evans, LTC B.W. Forrester, Jerry Fouse, Shirley Gerken, Gerald Griswold, Helen Harvey, Peter Huber, Larry Linkous, Patrick Liverpool, Joe Meredith, Donald A. Moore, Franklyn Moreno, Hiawatha Nicely, Con Sauls, Tom Starnes, Jim Stewart, Robert Stuart, Janet Tuckwiller, Larry "Jay" Williams, Jerry White, and Charles Wood.

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The Virginia Tech Media Department opened their files to us; photographs seen in this document were taken by Terry Hawthorne, Charles Shoffner, and Bob Veltri.

Working group participants devoted many days and nights to specific issues. Community meeting participants logged many hours to ensure that Vision 2020 represents a broad community perspective.

A special thanks goes to the Army and Alliant Techsystems Inc. staff (formerly Hercules, Inc.) at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. Their supportive participation in this project and their open door policy for us at the plant was key to the success of this effort.

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The dedication and hard work of all these individuals and groups, as well as those too numerous to list, have helped create Vision 2020. Their cumulative efforts ensure that Vision 2020 is a roadmap for a prosperous 21st Century in the New River Valley.

## Forward: The Chronology of Vision 2020

- ◆ **1989 - 1992**  
AT&T Plant Closes -- 1,000 jobs lost  
Radford Army Ammunition Plant (RAAP) lays off 900+ employees  
Sara Lee lays off 230 employees  
Wolverine lays off 45 employees  
Virginia Tech lays off 390 employees
- ◆ **September 1992**  
Armament Retooling and Manufacturing Support (ARMS) Initiative enacted by US Congress
- ◆ **November 1992**  
New River Valley Planning District Commission (NRVPDC) establishes New River Valley Economic Adjustment Strategy Steering Committee
- ◆ **January 1993**  
RAAP lays off 1,080 employees
- ◆ **February 1993**  
Congressman Boucher forms the RAAP Task Force
- ◆ **May 1993**  
New River Valley Planning District Commission receives \$197,800 from the US Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment to plan strategy for economic recovery
- ◆ **June 1993 - July 1994**  
Targeted Industries Study and Economic Analyses completed
- ◆ **August 1993 - December 1993**  
Community Meetings for Vision 2020 begin
- ◆ **October 1993 - March 1994**  
Working Groups for Vision 2020 are formed and meet
- ◆ **December 1994**  
RAAP lays off 250
- ◆ **January 1995**  
Hercules, Inc. signs Facilities Use Contract to allow commercial use of RAAP
- ◆ **August 1994 - March 1995**  
Vision 2020 multimedia presentation and final documents written, edited, and approved by Steering Committee.
- ◆ **March 1995**  
Alliant Techsystems, Inc. purchases Hercules Aerospace Division and takes over operation of RAAP
- ◆ **April 1995**  
Vision 2020 completed and distributed
- ◆ **April 1995**  
NRVPDC contracts with Alliant Techsystems, Inc. to develop a strategic reuse plan for RAAP

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## INTRODUCTION

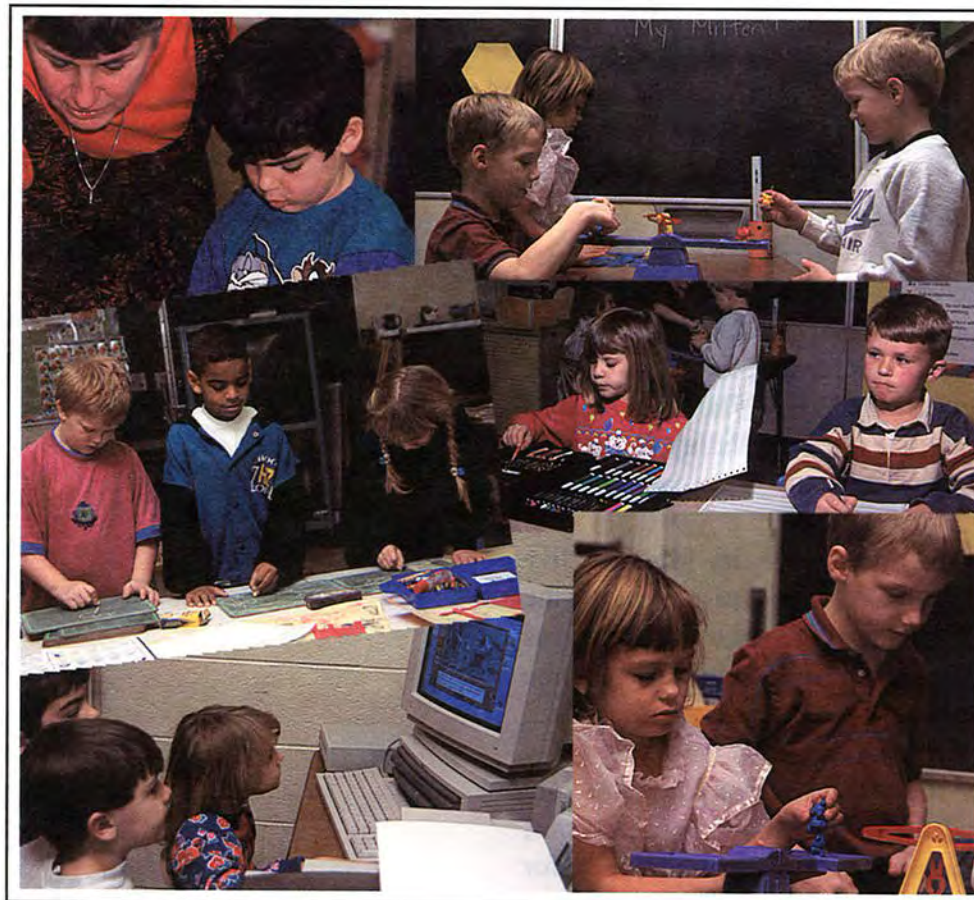
The children pictured on this page are a first grade class of 1994. They will graduate from high school in 2006, and some of them will then enter the workforce. Many others will go to college and begin their careers in 2010. If they choose to go on for postgraduate education, they will graduate and begin working sometime between 2012 to 2016.

Vision 2020 is not about a distant future, it's about the world we live in right now, and the world in which this first grade class will be productive citizens. In order to equip the present and future workforce with the skills and flexibility needed to be successful, now and in the 21st Century, the New River Valley will need to maintain its current momentum as well as incorporate many of the concepts and ideas offered by Vision 2020. It is imperative that the citizens of the New River Valley be able to meet the challenges of the rapidly-changing reality of new technology.

Implementing Vision 2020 will not only allow the

New River Valley to respond to advances, but will create an environment supportive of the development of new technologies and solutions.

Vision 2020 provides a course of action by which the residents of Virginia's New River Valley can have a positive influence on their future. It is a mechanism that will help shape the existing New River Valley into a global community, ready to advance with the opportunities of the 21st Century.



The immediate catalyst for the development of Vision 2020 was downsizing at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant (RAAP). However, the downsizing was in many ways simply the straw that broke the camel's back. For the past fifteen years, citizens, business and community leaders have watched an ever-widening gap between the urban and rural areas of Virginia. This gap is shown by disparate levels of income, employment, primary education, and growth.

While military downsizing is an event that the New River Valley community cannot control, the community can control its response to the downsizing. The wide-ranging effect of downsizing on the region is a clear signal that the New River Valley economy must change to remain competitive in the 21st Century. Vision 2020 is a culmination of the community's response to this call for change.

To determine what the New River Valley community wants for its future, the visioning process addressed these questions:

**What does the future hold for the New River Valley?**

**What do we want to happen in this future?**

**How are we planning to get there?**

The development of Vision 2020 was a community-driven process, the result of efforts by many groups and individuals. The strategies suggested here represent their best hopes for the New River Valley. It was spearheaded by the New River Valley Planning District Commission (NRVPC) and the New River Valley Economic Adjustment Strategy Steering Committee.

The New River Valley is positioned, with its high quality environment intact, to establish itself as a competitive player in the global economy. If citizens and leaders alike commit themselves to realizing Vision 2020, the region will be the high-quality home its citizens believe it can be.

This report is not intended to be the definitive plan for the region. It is designed to be another tool for communities, organizations, and individuals to use to build a bright and prosperous future for citizens of the New River Valley. The first part of this document provides an overview of where the New River Valley is today, and

where its citizens would like it to be in 2020. The second part outlines projects for Vision implementation. A multimedia presentation of this information has also been developed. It will be available on the Internet in June of 1995, and through the New River Valley Planning District Commission.

Each of us, as individuals, as members of interest groups, and as citizens of local governments, will be challenged to work together to realize Vision 2020. How well we meet that challenge will play a pivotal role in determining the success of the New River Valley in the 21st Century.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

The New River Valley has a strong foundation on which to build a globally competitive future. The region possesses a natural environment of immense beauty and bounty, as well as a skilled, trainable labor force. The New River Valley, like many other rural areas, has not suffered from the overcrowding in urban areas that contributes to the high crime rates and environmental degradation found in many cities. As a result, the region has the advantage of an attractive natural environment on which to build the components of the global electronic information age of the 21st century.

In addition to an attractive physical environment, the region's human resources make it a prime area for a successful global community. Over 24 percent of the New River Valley population are students at one of the region's institutions of higher learning: Virginia Tech, Radford University, and New River Community College (NRCC). These institutions, combined with a skilled workforce, provide the New River Valley with the human resources, quality of life, and training and research facilities necessary to participate in a global community.

## THE NEW RIVER VALLEY TODAY

A range of factors affecting regional development were considered during the visioning process. This section briefly describes the current status of those areas identified as crucial to Vision development.

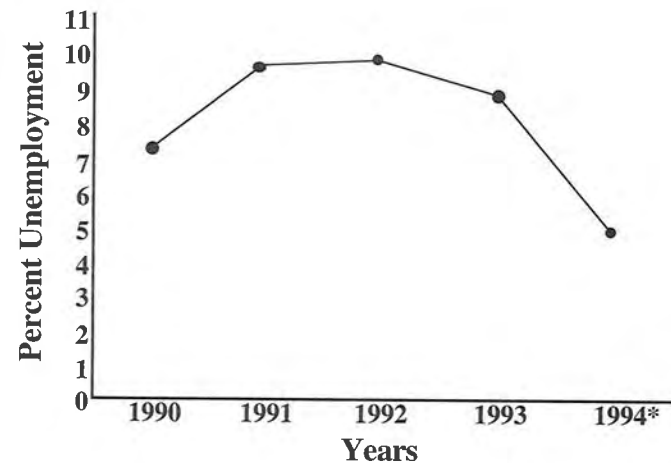
### Employment and Economy

The Commonwealth of Virginia has the largest per capita defense expenditures in the nation. The New River Valley region receives defense dollars on a par with the Hampton Roads area, which had

shipyard employment. Before defense downsizing, RAAP was the largest private employer in the region; it remains the highest wage employer in the New River Valley. The effects of defense downsizing at RAAP are felt regionally. As shown in Figure One, unemployment rates from 1990 to 1994 have been in or close to double digits for most New River Valley jurisdictions.

RAAP has laid off over 3,000 workers since 1989. In terms of lost wages in the region, those jobs cost New River Valley citizens \$34.2 million in associated earnings. Non-defense industries are also

FIGURE ONE  
New River Valley Unemployment Rates 1990-94



\*This drop in the unemployment rate reflects a change in the way this data is collected and calculated, not an actual change in the number of unemployed.

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

affected by the layoffs. For instance, the January 1993 layoffs of 1,080 employees had a ripple effect of 816 additional jobs lost. The associated earnings cost regional citizens \$14.8 million dollars.

There have been additional layoffs at RAAP since 1994, and other major employers in the region have also downsized (Table One). The combined impact on the region has been dramatic in terms of the overall economy and employment rates.

The New River Valley region is highly interrelated, which is one reason the ripple effect of RAAP layoffs is so extensive. Thirty four percent of regional residents commute from their home jurisdiction to another to work (Figure Two). This demonstrates why any layoff, no matter where it occurs, will have a broad impact

are connecting students to the Internet and beginning to integrate industry input into their curriculum. Secondary institutions provide education in both liberal arts and technical fields. The technical training that NRCC provides is readily accessible to all New River Valley citizens, and provides them with the skills necessary to compete in a global economy. NRCC also has an economic development center and an industrial training program. Virginia Tech is world-renowned for its engineering and architecture programs and has widely recognized graduate and undergraduate degree programs in these and other disciplines. They are also home

**TABLE ONE**  
**New River Valley Positions Lost 1989 - 1st Quarter, 1995**

Radford Army Ammunition Plant (RAAP)	3,206
AT&T	1,000
Virginia Tech	390
Sara Lee	230

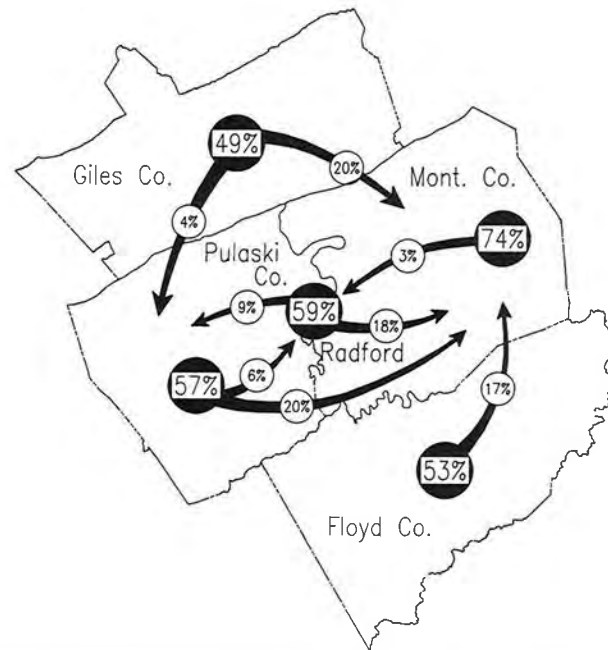
*Source: Virginia Employment Commission*

on the region. The January 1993 layoffs at RAAP were felt region-wide, although the plant itself lies only in Montgomery and Pulaski Counties. Another massive layoff occurred at the AT&T plant in Pulaski County in 1990; this plant was ultimately closed. This layoff and closing also had a region-wide impact.

**Education, Training, and Research & Development**

The New River Valley’s current education and training system is undergoing a transition that lays much of the groundwork for a prepared and productive 21st Century workforce. Primary schools

**FIGURE TWO**  
**New River Valley**  
**Labor Force Commuting Patterns**



*Source: 1990 Census of Population; 1985 Annual Survey of Manufacturing*



to the Extension service and Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties. Radford University is known for its nursing and business programs as well as innovative teaching.

### **Entrepreneurial Opportunities**

The New River Valley is renowned for its innovative technology, and several high-tech businesses have been started by regional entrepreneurs. However, the current New River Valley entrepreneurial community exists largely due to individual efforts, rather than to a concerted approach. Several small business training and support groups exist, and increasing community awareness of them could enhance their usefulness to New River Valley entrepreneurs. Western Virginia has a revolving loan fund but its capital requirements are well beyond that of most entrepreneurs. A microenterprise loan fund has been established in Southwestern Virginia, but it cannot meet all the needs of New River Valley entrepreneurs. For small loans, regional entrepreneurs usually must seek funding outside the State.

### **Physical Infrastructure**

The New River Valley is well-connected to the world electronically with Blacksburg's Electronic Village and an ever-expanding wireless and fiber optic system. The region is also connected via interstates, regional airports, and proximity to the Roanoke Regional Airport. Projects for additional roads and expansion of existing roads are in various stages of the planning process. Planning and construction of bikeways and walkways are also underway.

A number of industrial sites and parks have buildings available for immediate occupancy. However, several industrial parks are at or close to their capacity. Conversion, expansion, and enhancement of other industrial park areas are being pursued by local and regional leaders. Also, RAAP may be used in the future as the site for additional industrial manufacturing and office space.

Most of the area is served by municipal water and sewer systems; however, in some parts water and sewer lines need to be extended. According to recent engineering studies by Thompson & Litton, Inc., many regional citizens lack sufficient sanitation services. Local leaders are well aware of this situation and planning and construction of additional facilities are underway in several localities.

### **Natural and Cultural Environment**

While many communities across the nation were discovering numerous environmental hazards during the eighties and early nineties, the New River Valley retained its relatively pristine nature. The magnificent splendor of the natural environment is one of the region's greatest assets. The New River, with its north-flowing waters, is cited as the second oldest river in the world. The region also encompasses sections of the Jefferson National Forest, the Appalachian Trail, the Blue Ridge Parkway, a stand of virgin forest, and one of the two natural lakes in the entire Commonwealth, as well as several man-made lakes.

Agriculture remains a livelihood for many regional citizens. The land and resources necessary for agriculture also contribute to the pastoral setting and overall quality of life in the New River Valley.

The development, growth, and industrial use of the region have not yet exceeded the natural environment's ability to maintain and regenerate itself. Many areas have exceptional water and air quality. The spectacular ridges, valleys, streams, waterfalls, and long rolling vistas are some of the elements that attract people to the area and add to the overall quality of life.

The region also contains a rich cultural history of early colonial and westward expansion times. The region has much to offer historically, from a waterwheel-powered grist mill, covered bridges, and Civil War buildings to an early 1800's courthouse, reconstruction era train stations, and an outdoor historic play.

## Health and Human Services

The New River Valley has a range of agencies and nonprofit organizations offering health and human services. These include four United Way agencies, Habitat for Humanity, VMH, Inc., the New River Valley Agency on Aging and New River Community Action, among others. Nonetheless, the recently completed Human Needs Assessment shows that the New River Valley currently has needs that exceed the support services available in many areas. Households most often cited health care issues as major problems. Lack of medical insurance is a problem for over one third of the region's households. Another third have difficulty affording medical services and/or prescription medication. Other issues that were cited most frequently as problems include stress, anxiety, depression, and difficulty in finding work. Community concerns that were most prominent include underage drinking, alcoholism, unemployment, underemployment, and employment for the disabled.

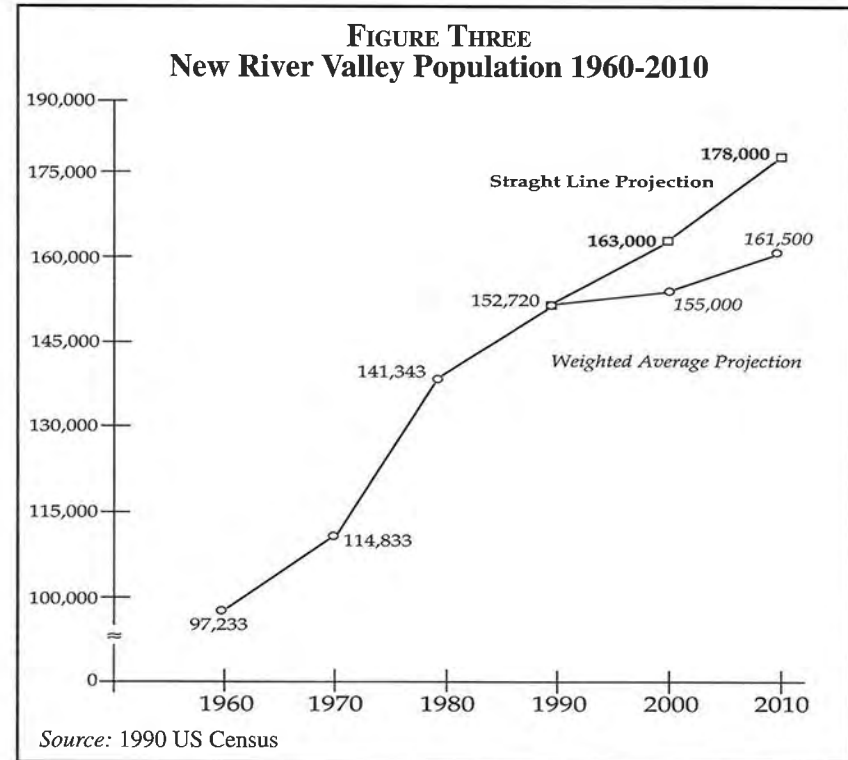
## The New River Valley's Features

The New River Valley consists of 1,486 square miles in Virginia's Southwest. It includes the Counties of Floyd, Giles, Pulaski, and Montgomery, and the City of Radford. The region lies along the New River, bounded by the Blue Ridge Escarpment and the Appalachian Plateau. Elevations range from approximately 1,400 to 4,300 feet above sea level.

The New River Valley has shown population growth, even with relatively high unemployment rates. The region's population is projected to grow by almost 30,000 people between 1990 and 2010 (Figure Three).

A majority of the region's population, as of 1990, is concentrated in the central portion of the region along the corridors of US Routes 11 and 460. Development in the region first occurred in the early 18th Century, when the area became important to pioneers traveling

West. Since that time, the use of land in the New River Valley, as in most other areas of the US, has become increasingly urban in nature.



The demographic patterns of land use have been determined, at least in part, by the region's physical features. In the future, physical features will tend to control development even more, as each year less land is available that is appropriate for development. The soil and slope conditions in the New River Valley indicate that the areas most feasible for development are along the New River.

These are the factors that New River Valley citizens and leaders had to work with when creating Vision 2020. The next section details the vision process.

## THE VISIONING PROCESS

New River Valley leaders are aware that the region's economy is highly interrelated. The jurisdictions of the region have joined together on many occasions to rally scarce resources to promote the New River Valley locally, nationally, and internationally. Efforts of this cooperation have yielded such organizations as the New River Valley Development Corporation, the New River Valley Economic Development Alliance, the Chamber Coalition, Community Vision 2020 Committee, Disability Services Board, and the New River Valley Response Team. These organizations have membership from across the region that assist all localities with issues relating to economic development, external marketing, small business assistance, citizen outreach, needs identification, community building, and business downsizing impact assessment. All these organizations, and many other regional and local groups, have worked hard to ensure that the existing quality of life in the New River Valley remains available to all citizens.



Though these organizations have been, and continue to be, very effective in their missions, it became clear to everyone involved in the RAAP downsizing that this was a bigger issue than any single organization could handle alone. With major layoffs facing the community, and more probable in the near future, regional community leaders came together to discuss the options of responding to the larger economic impact of defense downsizing on the New River Valley.

The NRVPC spearheaded this effort in two ways. First, it brought together a variety of community leaders and local government officials to identify a specific plan of action. Second, it pursued available funding sources for evaluating the overall impact of

defense downsizing. By November of 1992, a regional Economic Adjustment Strategy Steering Committee was formed. This group addressed the specific impacts of defense downsizing on the region and how the New River Valley community can best respond to those impacts. The Steering Committee also provided guidance during the process (see Figure Four).

Funding for the visioning effort was provided by the US Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA). This office provides planning grants for non-entitlement areas that have been affected by Department of Defense-related actions. The funding provided by this program allowed the New River Valley to assess the present situation thoroughly and to set a course for a brighter future for New River Valley citizens.

### **RAAP Task Force**

In addition, a RAAP Task Force formed to focus on events that affected only the plant, or events "inside the fence." This Task Force was initiated first by federal legislation, the Armament Retooling and Manufacturing Support Initiative (ARMS). ARMS calls for the joining of a broad membership of defense-downsizing entities in an effort to determine the best way to reuse and market available facilities at RAAP. This allows for coordination between the "inside the fence" and "outside the fence" efforts. Staff at the NRVPC serves on the RAAP Task Force, as well as on the Vision 2020 Steering Committee.

### **Community Meetings**

The NRVPC also coordinated community meetings to formulate the New River Valley's Vision 2020. There were several rounds of meetings in each of the jurisdictions. In the first round, citizens brainstormed about opportunities for their community. While each of the jurisdictions is unique, common threads arose from the discussions.

These common threads centered on valuing the natural environment as an asset; tourism development; encouraging small businesses throughout the region; maintaining quality education, leading the world in new technologies; expanding local industrial parks as well as developing a regional industrial park; increasing the level of regional participation in joint agreements; and establishing a community vision.

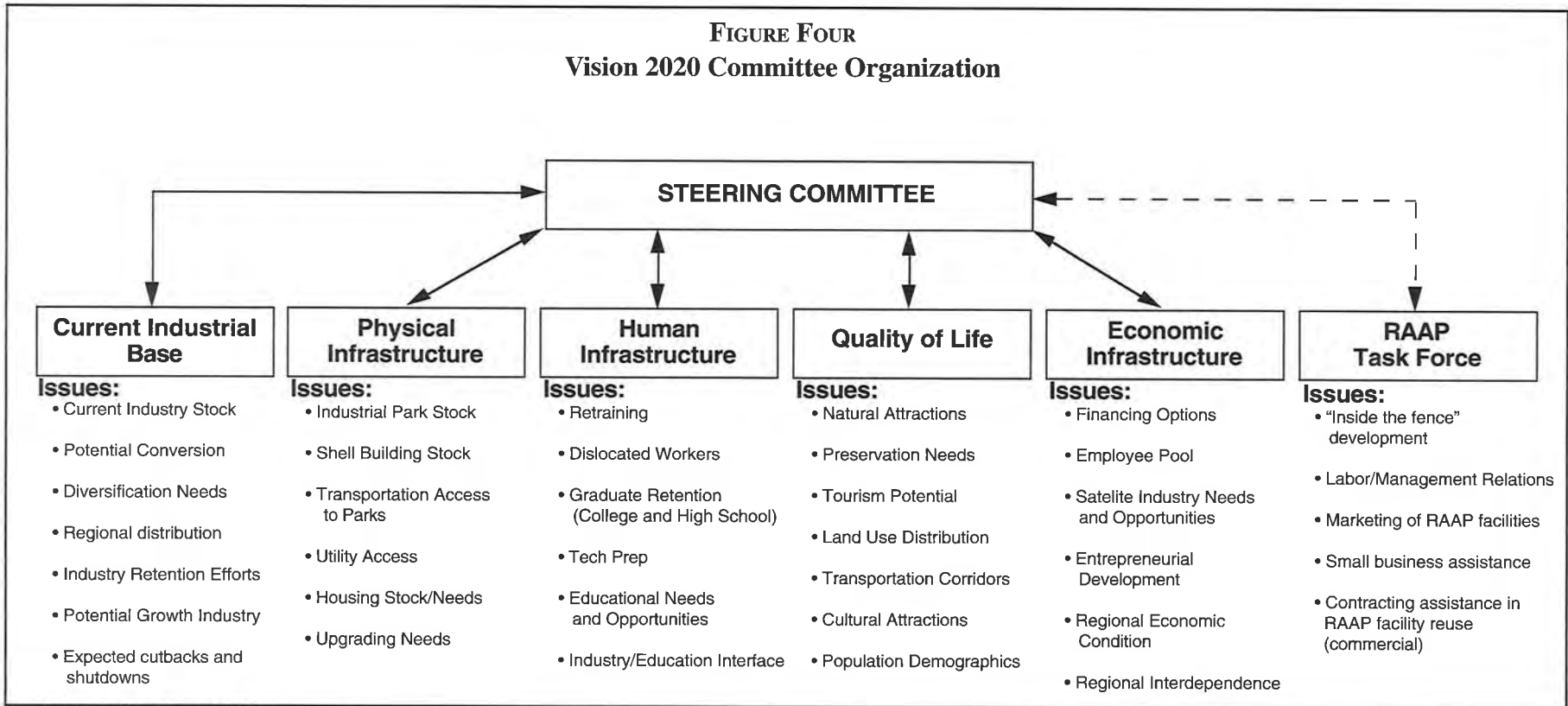
These ideas are almost all regional in their scope. This broad-based thinking shows that citizens realize the importance of acting as a region in achieving a successful future. This is an important step toward the ultimate success of the New River Valley.

The ideas generated during the first round of meetings formed the basis for Vision 2020. In successive meetings, citizens suggested and prioritized specific projects that they felt would best maximize the region's potential for a prosperous future. Those projects serve as a basis for the implementation of Vision 2020, and are presented in the final section.

### Working Groups

The ongoing efforts of the five Working Groups were designed to focus on various aspects of regional development. The working groups were: the Corporate Roundtable (listed in Figure Four as "Current Industrial Base"), the Physical Infrastructure Group, the

**FIGURE FOUR**  
**Vision 2020 Committee Organization**



Human Development Group, the Quality of Life Group, and the Economic Infrastructure Group.

These groups were formed to ensure that the Vision accurately reflected community wishes and will be implementable; each Working Group had a diverse and committed membership. The various groups served as both advisor and strategy development team in conjunction with engineering contractors and NRPDC staff to develop fully the visions that stemmed from the community meetings. The membership of these groups included community and business leaders with their fingers on the pulse of community activities. Often, the groups would identify key players to drive certain components of the plan or would devise a procedure for the development of an implementation body. They also brought forward ideas for implementation as well as critical checklists for monitoring success in the various Vision areas.

The Corporate Roundtable continues to meet quarterly. This is a working group of business leaders established to evaluate the current industrial base and potential growth areas in that base. Members exchange problems and possible solutions as well as information and trends affecting the region. The membership of this group includes local manufacturing and service industry representatives, educational institution representatives, small business owners, and local economic development organizations representatives.

Roundtable members met throughout the visioning process to examine the attributes and needs of the current physical and economic infrastructure in the region. Their input was invaluable to the development of appropriate goals and plans for enhancing the commercial, service, and manufacturing climate of the New River Valley. Their input remains vital to the implementation of Vision 2020 goals as these are further defined and projects are pursued.

The synergism between Working Groups and the broad community meetings was also important to Vision development. Often Working Groups held joint meetings with each other; minutes from all Working Group meetings were broadly distributed. This aspect of the community input process allowed participants to focus on their areas of special interest and expertise. In turn, this allowed the NRPDC staff to tap invaluable community resources without exhausting the Steering Committee. These community-driven efforts culminated in the development of Vision 2020.

### **Proactive Approach**

The need for a proactive economic development approach was obvious to all players in the visioning process. The proactive approach contrasts with the typical reactionary, or status quo, approach to development. With status quo development, projects are undertaken with little or no consideration for other areas of community development that they may affect. Such development scenarios often leave a community vulnerable to any change in the general economic climate or variations in specific areas of its workforce or industrial mix. If the New River Valley undertakes projects in this manner, or only in the face of economic emergencies (i.e., major downsizing or plant closings), it will not move forward, because it will always be playing “catch-up.”

A proactive approach integrates the physical, educational, and financial areas of projects as they are undertaken. It also examines future costs, benefits, and community characteristics when developing strategies to build the desired community. By including input from seemingly “nontraditional” economic development sectors, such as the entrepreneurial sector, and by focusing on future impacts, a community can invest in long term goals and a sustainable economy for its citizens. A proactive approach will allow the New River Valley to capitalize on its defense downsizing opportunities and prevent its future from being drastically impacted by a single industry.

Regional cooperation in this effort is critical to the overall, long-term health of the region. As stated earlier, jurisdictions in the New River Valley have already demonstrated their ability to work together. This commitment to cooperation is also shown by the construction and marketing of the New River Valley Airport, and the formation of the New River Valley Industrial Commission. The regional development of the Peppers Ferry Waste Water Treatment Facility, the regional Human Services Needs Assessment, and the development of Vision 2020 show that regional cooperation is a continuous trend.

The NRVPDC played a large role in coordinating recommendations of the RAAP Task Force, the Vision 2020 Steering Committee, and community meeting participants. This role as coordinator has allowed the NRVPDC to compile and prepare this document and the three visions on the next page. These visions represent what citizens, business and community leaders believe the New River Valley should set as the benchmarks by which to judge the success of the visions for our region.

Several projects to achieve these visions are already underway. The New River Community College offers a Tool & Die Moldmaking course. ISO 9000 courses are being offered region-wide, and Litton Polyscientific recently received ISO 9001 certification. Magnox, Inc. provided ISO 9000 training for all its employees, shutting down its operation for two days so that the labor force could be brought up to international standards of excellence. Virginia Tech is the largest producer of graduates with expertise in wireless communications. Several of these graduates have developed products that have in turn led to million-dollar businesses.

Vision 2020 looks at the goals the region's citizens, business and community leaders want. Working for Vision 2020 in a comprehensive, forward-looking fashion will make the New River

Valley a globally competitive region in the coming decades. It will also allow the region to retain those unique characteristics that make it home to a diverse and integrated citizenry.

# NEW RIVER VALLEY VISION 2020

**An optimum level of employment**

**\$ An income level equal to or better than the state's average \$**

**A beneficial living environment**



In order to achieve these Visions, a number of elements must come together. These include:

**A complete physical infrastructure**

**A world-class labor force**



**A high quality of life**

## NEW RIVER VALLEY 2020

The visioning process led to six key areas that the community and Steering Committee determined were key to Vision 2020:

- ◆ Education and Training
- ◆ Entrepreneurial Community
- ◆ Basic Employer and Support Community
- ◆ Physical Infrastructure
- ◆ Natural and Cultural Environment
- ◆ Human Development

This section begins the discussion of each key area with the Vision for that key area. The discussion then moves to preliminary answers for each key area to the three questions asked at the beginning of the document: What does the future hold for the New River Valley?, What do we want to happen in this future?, and How are we going to get there? This is our Vision of the New River Valley for the not-so-distant future, 2020.

### **Education and Training 2020 Vision:**

*The New River Valley provides a cooperative educational system with quality personal, professional, and technical education for all citizens of the region.*

A well-prepared workforce is the key to a bright and successful future for the New River Valley. Vision 2020 depends on a labor force with the basic skills needed to adapt to a 21st Century workplace. The economy of the coming century is one that will be based on information exchange. Skilled persons in the area of higher technology services will be the players in that exchange. Our youth



will compete successfully in this new economy only if we educate them about future employment trends and their role in that future.

Another part of educating students about current and future technology will involve computer literacy and Internet links. The Internet provides access to the world in terms of technology, general information, current events, and future trends. Understanding the power of the Internet, as well as how to use it, is already critical to many businesses, industries and individuals. Its importance is expected to grow exponentially in the immediate future.

Dublin Elementary has an observatory and connections to the Internet and combines the two in a way that is an example of innovative cross-discipline instruction. This program links together astronomy, writing, computer science, and communication skills by creating a "world-wide web page" on the Internet that describes their observatory. More innovative programs to package cross-disciplinary skills in regional schools are needed to implement Vision 2020 fully.



Higher education has traditionally been a strength in the New River Valley. Continued support for higher education is a critical part of Vision 2020. Increased coordination between colleges and universities, as well as with primary schools, will help ensure that the region retains its reputation as home to innovative and progressive educational opportunities.

Blacksburg Electronic Village (BEV) recently celebrated its one year anniversary. Groups are being formed across the region to assist in connecting all jurisdictions in the region to either BEV or other Internet systems.

In order to achieve the Vision for this key area, New River parents, teachers, taxpayers, and school boards will have to continue to use innovative teaching approaches. They will also need to stay abreast of technological advances and integrate them, as appropriate, into primary and secondary education.

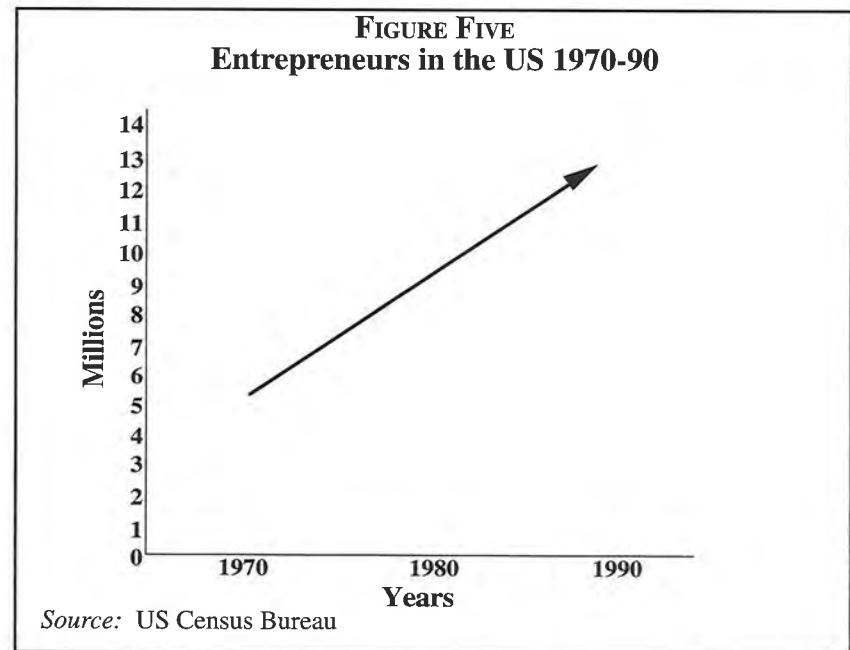
Another part of this key area of the Vision is ensuring that all students are encouraged to develop their abilities fully. Realigning local resources to support early childhood development programs will help all students reach their highest, most productive skill level. Yet another aspect of this key area is using need and ability screening to identify and address potential barriers to learning.

These efforts in combination with innovative teaching will ensure that the New River Valley has a competitive, highly trained workforce in the 21st Century. This means that education must continue after childhood: adults will need to be trained and retrained throughout their careers to insure that their skills keep pace with technological developments.

**Entrepreneurial Community 2020 Vision:**

*The New River Valley uses local ideas and technologies, leverages private investment, and fulfills unmet and future market demands.*

Entrepreneurialism is an important component in future business development. US Department of Labor statistics show the number of entrepreneurs in the US has more than doubled from 5.5 million to almost 12 million since 1970 (Figure Five). This trend is expected to continue, as the information age lends itself well to individual consulting, one form of entrepreneurialism.



The Small Business Administration estimates that approximately six out of every ten small businesses fail within three years of start-up. It has long been known that job creation throughout the United States comes largely from small businesses; this region in particular relies on such a job base. This national average of failure is not acceptable for the New River Valley entrepreneurial community.

There is an obvious link between successful entrepreneurial efforts, business training, and quality. By linking appropriate business assistance with financing and quality control opportunities, the small business successes in this region can greatly outpace the national average. People Inc., in Bristol, Virginia has successfully linked business assistance with financing.

One of the projects underway to realize this key area of Vision 2020 is the establishment of a microenterprise loan fund in the New River Valley. Monies have been secured to set up an administrative and organizational study; a microenterprise organization will be identified in the near future. Funds for this loan program will be solicited from the Commonwealth and local lending institutions.

The New River Valley Development Corporation and the Small Business Development Center currently provide assistance to businesses in the form of financial consulting, business plan development, and management assistance. In cooperation with these agencies, the Appalachian Regional Recycling Commission provides business development assistance to recycling entrepreneurs.

In addition, the development and coordination of tourism activities is currently underway. These efforts should continue in a manner that encourages entrepreneurs to provide tourism services. Bed and breakfasts, tours, and crafts shops are all enterprises that can be run by entrepreneurs.

The region is also pursuing funding for the development of an incubator facility to house start-up industries. The National Business Incubator Association (NBIA) indicates that tenants of small business incubators enjoy a success rate of over 80 percent. The economic climate of the New River Valley is conducive to developing an incubator and there is strong community support for and interest in this project. By linking the universities and their technologies to such a program, successful implementation of a competitive and growth-inducing incubator system is just around the corner.

Entrepreneurial support will be fruitless, however, without entrepreneurs. The 21st Century workforce will need to translate innovative ideas into real applications. This will require personal skills, as well as an understanding of small business finance and management. Tomorrow's entrepreneurs will also have to adapt to a rapidly changing environment; flexibility will be crucial. To succeed in the 21st Century, today's children need to be taught these skills from the first grade through their college years and beyond.

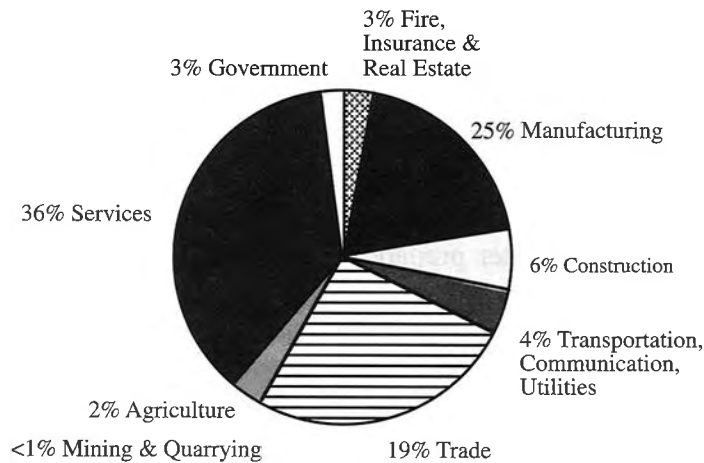
**Basic Employer & Support Community 2020 Vision:**

*The New River Valley has a diverse, stable business and industry community that provides high quality jobs while maximizing return on investment.*

The basic employer and support community refers to the region's economic base. Retaining, growing, and enhancing this community is fundamental to Vision 2020. The current make-up of the basic employer and support community is illustrated in Figure Six.

To achieve the Vision in this key area, links between industry and technology need to be tightened. Local industries should be linked

**FIGURE SIX**  
**New River Valley Civilian Labor Force**



Source: US Census Bureau

more closely to the technology and research capabilities of Virginia Tech, Radford University, and New River Community College. This could happen through regular industry-university meetings, formation of a Steering Committee to exchange information, or a regular newsletter between industries and college and university departments with research that corresponds to industry needs.

Marketing the region’s existing industrial, technology and research space, as well as its uniquely skilled workforce, will also be a factor in achieving Vision 2020. To this end, a Targeted Industries study of the region showed the ripple effects of additional manufacturing jobs (Table Two).

The industries that would be attracted to the New River Valley and meet the region’s needs are listed in Table Three by Standard Industrial Code (SIC).

It is important to remember that industries already established in New River Valley communities should be given equal weight in the pursuit of Vision 2020. Incoming industries may not hire all their employees from the region, while established industries draw almost entirely from the current labor pool.

Emphasis on quality is also an important part of this key area. ISO 9000 is one of an internationally accepted series of quality management standards, and is considered by many to be the basis of quality programs. Communities striving to be globally competitive must have a framework to support businesses installing ISO 9000, as certification is increasingly a requirement of doing business with foreign companies. We have such a framework in the New River Valley: specialists with internationally recognized credentials; an ISO 9000 user's group; and two- and four-year colleges providing instruction.

**TABLE TWO**  
**The Effects of 100 Full-time Manufacturing Jobs on the Local Economy**

**Indirect Jobs: + 107**  
**Local population: +416**  
**Retail sales: + \$2.7 million,**  
**Aggregate personal income: + \$6.6. million**

Source: *An Economic Opportunities Analysis for the New River Valley*  
 by Thomas G. Johnson et. al.

An ISO 9000 registrar awards certification to individual businesses and is totally independent of training and implementation. Presently, efforts are being made to bring a registrar or an affiliate registrar to the region. This will greatly enhance the attractiveness

**TABLE THREE**  
**Target Industries**  
**for the New River Valley by SIC Code**

<i>SIC CODE</i>	<i>INDUSTRY</i>
2452	Prefabricated Wood Buildings
2824	Noncellulosic Organic Fibers
2835	Diagnostic Substances
3053	Gaskets, Packing & Scaling
3080	Miscellaneous Plastic Products
3443	Fabricated Plated Work
3471	Plating & Polishing
3543	Industrial Patterns
3545	Special Dies and Tools & Accessories
3562	Ball Bearing & Roller Bearings
3599	Industrial Machines
3674	Semiconductors & Related Devices
3713	Truck & Bus Bodies
3812	Search & Navigation Equipment
3827	Optical Instruments & Lenses
3822	Automatic Temperature Controls
3829	Mechanical Measuring Devices
3841	Surgical & Medical Instruments
3842	Surgical Appliances & Supplies
4890	Communications Except Radio

*Source: An Economic Opportunities Analysis for the New River Valley by Thomas G. Johnson et. al.*

of the region to new or expanding firms. It will also assure companies trading internationally that we have a complete framework for our businesses to meet international quality standards.

Besides marketing the region to industries, marketing the region to tourists needs basic employer support. This can be done through instruction for hospitality employees and providing better basic travel information about the region. Funding for professional direction for Hosts, the regional tourist organization, is also

necessary for success. With a coordinated effort and interregional partnerships, the New River Valley's chances of being a tourist destination will be improved.

Engineering firms and testing labs are other examples of the region's highly skilled support industries. By linking the appropriate targeted industries with the skill bases of our higher-education graduates and the highly competitive jobs they can attain, the region will enhance its competitive advantage. Internship and apprenticeship programs can better prepare the future workforce for the "real world" job market. These programs often become full time employment for the intern or apprentice, thus allowing the region to retain a highly-skilled workforce.

Efforts to support existing industry, recruit appropriate new industry, and promote tourism will ensure that the region moves into the next century with a diverse, ample, and healthy job base.

**Physical Infrastructure 2020 Vision:**

*The New River Valley has complete and quality infrastructure to support the goals, needs, and aspirations of the regional community.*

Physical infrastructure refers to the transportation and communication networks and utilities of the region. Without the physical infrastructure to support the expansion of current and new industry and its accompanying labor force, it will be impossible to realize Vision 2020. There are multiple physical infrastructure projects necessary to create the globally competitive community envisioned by New River Valley residents (see Figure Seven for one such project, the New River Industrial Park). These efforts involve the construction and enhancement of industrial

**FIGURE SEVEN**  
**New River Industrial Park Site Phases**



10034-016  
 SHEET 1 OF 1  
 Phased Concept Plan  
 The Viscoe Site  
 Industrial Development  
 Pulaski County, Virginia  
 PREPARED BY  
 DATE: 2/24/21  
 SCALE: AS SHOWN  
 DESIGNED BY: RLB  
 CHECKED BY: RLB  
 BLACKSBURG, VA  
 GREENSBORO, NC  
 Engineers  
 Surveyors  
 Planners  
 ANDERSON  
 AND  
 ASSOCIATES, Inc.

parks; expanding or improving water and sewer service; and transportation development projects. Many of these are already underway. Projects in the planning stage need the support of citizens, localities and federal agencies in order to be implemented. All these projects will need a large amount of time, energy, and capital.

The New River Valley currently has excellent access to road transportation, as well as a regional airport that can serve industries using “just-in-time” marketing techniques. There are plans to expand this airport as well as improve its access to road and rail transportation. It has also been proposed that a road connecting Route 100 and Blacksburg be constructed.

Numerous other infrastructure improvements will be needed to return the area to pre-defense layoff employment levels. Among them are projects to provide industrial sites with water, sewer and transportation access; industrial buildings; multi-tenant buildings; and communications infrastructure.

Local business and community leaders will have to take the initiative in both the cooperative development of these projects and in their implementation. This will ensure that the physical base necessary to compete successfully in the 21st Century will be developed in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

**The Natural and Cultural Environment 2020 Vision:**

*The New River Valley is an attractive and desirable place to live, work, and visit.*

The New River Valley is known to its residents as a place of great beauty and considerable outdoor recreational opportunities. As the region becomes globally competitive, its cultural and natural

resources must not be lost. This is important from the perspective of current and future residents’ quality of life, and from that of attracting and retaining industries. Bob Hall, author of the "Gold and Green" report by the Institute for Southern Studies, notes that “[t]he states that do the most to protect their natural resources also wind up with the strongest economies and best jobs for their citizens.” Working to preserve the high quality of life is part of working on the regional economy. Additional bikeways and greenways will make the outdoors more accessible to more people.

Capitalizing on the region’s proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway is another aspect of Vision 2020. This also ties in with entrepreneurial efforts, as many tourist support businesses are excellent opportunities for entrepreneurs, such as bed and breakfasts, tours, and craft shops. Table Four illustrates the number of dollars currently generated by tourism in the New River Valley. There is room for an increase in the dollars generated by tourism, especially in areas close to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Building on the ideas of ecotourism -- e.g., capitalizing on natural features rather than replacing them with man-made attractions -- will allow the region to market itself to tourists as well as create additional opportunities for residents. Part of this effort will be the regional marketing of festivals, such as the Chateau Morrisette Jazz Festivals, and Blacksburg’s Steppin’ Out Festival. Currently, there are festivals in some part of the region every weekend from late April through the end of October, yet there is no “package” marketing effort to promote them. Developing a “festival package” will help promote the region as a tourist destination. Again, professional direction for Hosts may help in this effort.

To ensure that the region retains the beauty and bounty of its natural resources, the adoption and practice of sound land use planning and utility development will be necessary. This will encourage responsible land use and promote the selling points of the region’s

**TABLE FOUR**  
**Tourism in the New River Valley, 1992**  
**(Preliminary)**

Category	Floyd County	Giles County	Montgomery County	Pulaski County	City of Radford
Total Travel Expenditures (\$000)	\$6,630	\$14,450	\$47,490	\$18,430	\$7,430
Total Generated Payroll (\$000)	940	2,800	11,090	2,910	1,600
State Tax Receipts (\$000)	290	720	2,390	890	390
Local Tax Receipts (\$000)	580	490	630	1,210	170
Total Generated Employment	70	230	940	240	140

*Source:* US Travel Data Center, Virginia Department of Tourism "1992 Travel in Virginia: An Economic Report" Richmond 1992, and the Center for Public Service

natural beauty. Recent efforts at viewshed protection along the Blue Ridge Parkway exemplify this type of cooperation.

Fulfilling this part of Vision 2020 will require both political will and community involvement. Citizens and their leaders will need to work together to ensure that the balance between industrial development and natural and cultural protection is one that allows appropriate development without jeopardizing the region's high quality of life.

**Human Development 2020 Vision:**

*The New River Valley provides opportunities for families and individuals to achieve their potential.*

A global community cannot afford to ignore any of its citizens. To be competitive on an international level, all New River Valley residents must have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. This is a crucial element in developing and maintaining a high quality labor force. Efforts in this direction are already underway; continuing and enhancing them are critical to the success of Vision 2020.

Localities will need to funnel resources to early childhood development programs to ensure that all Valley residents will be active players in the 21st Century. Identifying and assisting "at risk" individuals and families will encourage their productive participation in the present and future workforce.

To achieve Vision 2020, the New River Valley will need to coordinate and maximize the use of existing public and private human service resources. Fostering interagency cooperation in the delivery of human resources will play a critical part in that coordination and maximization. Child and adult day care are both services that current citizens and new and expanding industries will look to as one indicator of quality of life in the New River Valley. Additional providers will help the New River Valley be globally competitive.

Like education, human development is a cornerstone of a competitive 21st Century workforce. Providing appropriate assistance to all citizens will ultimately strengthen the region, and make residents better equipped to participate as productive members of the labor force.

## PROJECT MAP AND INITIATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

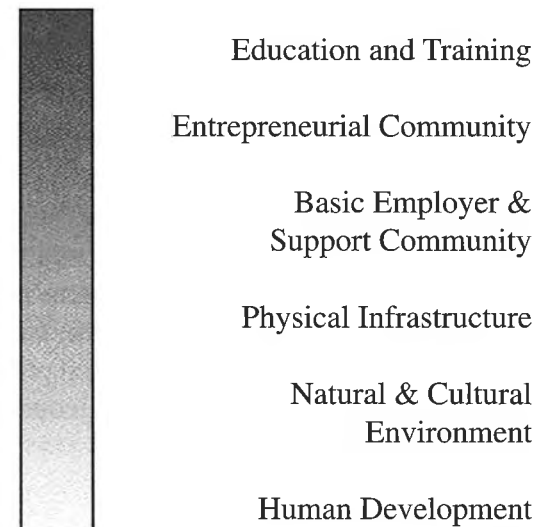
The map included at the back of the document shows the New River Valley and the Initiative areas for Vision 2020. The next section details the projects associated with these Initiatives. The projects fall within the six Vision categories, and are coded by a vertical grey scale bar to the left of the project listings. While some of the projects fall within a single Vision category, others fall within two or more categories. An example of this is "Enhancement of the Blue Ridge Parkway," which falls into both the **Natural Resources Initiative** and the **Tourism Initiative**. This overlap shows the interrelatedness of Vision 2020. Multiple listings of projects are not intended to suggest that there should be more than one effort, just that the effort should be coordinated across initiative boundaries. Furthermore, the number of projects associated with each Initiative is a reflection of the ease with which Initiatives lend themselves to project specification, not of their relative importance or lack thereof.

At the top of each Initiative page, the Vision grey scale coding is shown, with *Education and Training* on the darkest end of the scale and *Human Development* at the lightest end. We have approximated these areas of overlap by placing those projects near the "edge" of the grey-scale strip. For example, the project "Entrepreneurial Training" falls within both *Education and Training* and *Entrepreneurial Community*, so it is placed between the two.

A dollar value is attached to each of the projects. Because some of these projects will not begin for several years, these dollar figures should be considered estimates rather than definitive costs. They are based on the best knowledge of the Planning District Commission staff. As the political world changes in the coming years, project and funding priorities may shift as well.

Most importantly, this plan is a living document. It will take citizens and leaders willing to "champion" these projects for them to become a reality.

The New River Valley Planning District Commission has been established to assist local governments in the New River Valley with the planning and implementation of these projects. Communities will have to coordinate their efforts and cooperate with each other in order to realize this Vision. Those citizens who participated in creating Vision 2020 already realize the importance of working as a region. With effort and faith, Vision 2020 will be realized and the New River Valley will be a globally competitive community in the 21st Century.





# EDUCATION INITIATIVE



## INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Apprenticeship & Internship Programs:** Involves coordinating and expanding existing programs.
- Entrepreneurial Education:** Integrates entrepreneurial thinking into primary and secondary educational curriculum; also involves business and industry in education.
- School-Business Partnerships :** Provides money for expansion of the current school-business partnership in Giles County to all New River Valley jurisdictions.
- Link Schools & Libraries Electronically:** Uses fiber-optic technology to link all public schools and their libraries.
- Enhance the Governor's School:** Aids in the effort to upgrade and enhance the regional Governor's School.
- Lobby for Educational Programs:** Provides one year's salary for an individual to lobby the state legislature for business and educational support from the state.
- Enhance Early Childhood Programs:** Involves expanding HeadStart and EvenStart programs to all jurisdictions as well as increasing intervention efforts for at-risk children and their families.
- Extend Pulaski's Critical Years/Critical Skills Program:** Expands the Critical Years/Critical Skills program, which concentrates resources on the kindergarten to third grade years of education, to all jurisdictions.

## ***PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE***

Education is an investment for the future well-being not only of our students but of our society. It is an investment that must not be shirked if the New River Valley is to prosper in the 21st Century. Basic skills are the foundation of a highly qualified, adaptable workforce. In order to prepare the workforce of the future, industry must be integrated with our educational process. Real world examples brought into the classroom prepare students for the world they will work in.

Students must be instilled with the entrepreneurial spirit that gives young people the confidence and the tools to work in specialized market niches. In addition, they must be given the financial and management training necessary to work either for themselves or for smaller, flexible organizations.

<b><i>INITIAL PROJECTS</i></b>	
Apprenticeship & Internship Programs	\$150K
Entrepreneurial Education	\$500K
School-Business Partnerships	\$6M
Link Schools & Libraries Electronically	\$1.2M
Enhance the Governor's School	\$4M
Lobby for Educational Programs	\$50K
Enhance Early Childhood Programs	\$2.6M
Extend Pulaski's Critical Years/Critical Skills Program	\$5.7M

# TRADITIONAL MANUFACTURING INITIATIVE



## INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Dublin Industrial Park:** Ensures development of the Dublin Industrial Park, including access road, building rehabilitation, and related site work.
- Falling Branch Industrial Park:** Development of the Falling Branch Industrial Park in Montgomery County includes extension of water and sewers, site development, and road upgrades.
- Floyd Industrial Park:** Provides monies to expand the shell building in Floyd Industrial Park.
- Montgomery County Multi-Tenant Facility:** Involves rehabilitation of a former textile production facility in Christiansburg, to provide space for up to eight companies.
- New River Valley Airport Industrial Park:** Provides funds for the three-phase development of the New River Valley Airport Industrial Park in Dublin into a just-in-time manufacturing center.
- New River Industrial Park:** This will provide money for the development and administration of a regional industrial park. Included in the park is the potential development of the **Competitiveness Center** (see **Specialty Manufacturing Initiative**).
- Radford Army Ammunition Plant:** Currently undergoing a strategic planning process, RAAP will play an important role in the diversification of the economic base through facility and equipment reuse.

## PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE

Although the New River Valley has a good, strong base of diverse industries, even more are needed to utilize fully the region's potential. The base that current industry provides, along with the development of industrial sites, will attract more economic activity. Attracting and growing companies identified as target industries will capitalize on our unique assets while balancing regional interests in job creation and quality of life. "Big industries" are not necessarily the only players in this process. The region can have a manufacturing community that fills a niche in manufacturing processes. Becoming a supplier to big industries provides an opportunity to grow flexible, entrepreneurial companies. As small businesses are the source of most job growth in the US, working to develop smaller "niche" businesses will probably be one of the most effective means of growing our economy.

<i>INITIAL PROJECTS</i>	
Dublin Industrial Park	\$3.3M
Falling Branch Industrial Park	\$6.2M
Floyd Industrial Park	\$1M
Montgomery County Multi-Tenant Facility	\$3.2M
New River Valley Airport Industrial Park	\$2M
New River Industrial Park	\$8.7M
Radford Army Ammunition Plant	\$*
<p>* A strategic plan for plant reuse is currently under development; until its completion estimates as to the cost of its conversion are meaningless.</p>	

# *SPECIALTY MANUFACTURING INITIATIVE*



## INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Competitiveness Center/Manufacturing Incubator:** These will be contained within the **New River Industrial Park** (see **Traditional Manufacturing Initiative**). The Competitiveness Center will coordinate regional marketing, business assistance, and planning efforts. The Manufacturing Incubator will serve as an incubator for targeted manufacturing industries and a "one stop shop" for local business efforts. This facility is proposed to be the gateway for the New River Valley industrial sector.

**Start-up Business Center:** Provides the funds to develop and administer a Start-up Business Center at Radford University.

**Communications Center:** This center will be part of the **Competitiveness Center** (see above) and will provide appropriate communication technology to link the region.

**Montgomery County Multi-Tenant Facility:** See **Traditional Manufacturing Initiative**.

**Mentoring Program:** Links small businesses and entrepreneurs with experienced business people who will provide guidance to those starting and expanding businesses.

## *PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE*

Entrepreneurial spirit and business training are vital to developing the specialty manufacturing sector. These start-ups will thrive in an atmosphere where risk-taking is encouraged. The area's universities provide a source of new technology on which start-ups can be based. In addition, working with the needs of the community will provide more small business opportunities while ultimately serving the community. Examining our challenges -- e.g., solid waste -- in an entrepreneurial fashion may provide all of us with solutions -- e.g., recycling businesses. Specialty manufacturing requires this new way of thinking, as well as new ways of doing business.

<i>INITIAL PROJECTS</i>	
Competitiveness Center/ Manufacturing Incubator	\$2.5M
Start-up Business Center	\$1M
Communications Center	\$1.2M
Montgomery County Multi-Tenant Facility	\$3.2M
Mentoring Program	\$150K

# ***BUSINESS SUPPORT INITIATIVE***



## **INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**School-Business Partnerships:** See **Education Initiative**.

**Apprenticeship & Internship Programs:** See **Education Initiative**.

**Entrepreneurial Training:** Includes specialized training courses for potential entrepreneurs as well as support from the microenterprise organization (see **Microenterprise Loan Fund**).

**Microenterprise Loan Fund:** Provides training and seed money to entrepreneurs who need small amounts of funding to get their idea or product off the ground, or to expand their existing business.

**Revolving Loan Fund:** Supports a regional revolving loan fund that will be targeted to small businesses and entrepreneurs for expansion and start-up costs that are beyond those of the **Microenterprise Loan Fund**.

**Quality Assurance Systems:** Aids in the establishment of an ISO 9000 registrar in the New River Valley, as well as supporting ongoing efforts of the New River Valley Quality Council and other quality-focused organizations.

**One-Stop Shop for Business Assistance:** This will serve as an information clearinghouse for new and established businesses about financing, loans, mentoring, consulting, and legal issues.

## ***PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE***

Small businesses and start-up companies are the basis for job growth in the United States. Fostering support for the development of these, as well as expanded targeted assistance for existing industry, will render a healthy pro-business atmosphere in our region. Diverse financing options is another vehicle to achieve this climate. However, a pro-business atmosphere does not preclude environmental responsibility. Innovative enterprises and support systems can balance the need for jobs with a clean world. A philosophy of shared-risk/shared-gain must be embraced by regional citizens and leaders if we are to succeed in this attempt.

### ***INITIAL PROJECTS***

School-Business Partnerships	\$6M
Apprenticeship & Internship Programs	\$150K
Entrepreneurial Training	\$500K
Microenterprise Loan Fund	\$2M
Revolving Loan Fund	\$20M
Quality Assurance Systems	\$300K
One-Stop Shop for Business Assistance	\$200K
Lobbying Efforts	\$50K

# *TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE*



## INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Transportation Technology Innovation:** Provides money to support the development of transportation technology (e.g., the Smart Road).
- Dublin to Blacksburg Connector:** This will provide easier access to the New River Valley Airport Industrial Park for businesses and commuter flights.
- New Interchange at Falling Branch:** Allows for the construction of an interchange near the Falling Branch Industrial Park and the bypass connector.
- Route 114 Expansions:** Provides monies to expand Route 114 to four lanes between Route 460 and RAAP.
- Route 8 Expansions:** Supports general improvements throughout the length of Route 8.
- Route 100 Expansions:** Expands Route 100 into a four-lane road over Cloyd's Mountain.
- Park & Ride Lots:** Provides funds to build "Park & Ride" lots that will allow commuters, business people, and tourists to use public transportation to get to major business areas or natural attractions.
- Bridge to New River Industrial Park:** This proposed bridge will connect the New River Industrial Park to the City of Radford.
- Bikeways & Greenways Construction:** Provides for construction of planned paths as noted in the "Bikeways & Greenways" plan.

## *PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE*

Transportation and land use are inextricably linked to regional development. If economic health is to be achieved, a complete transportation network is needed to support the enhanced business sites. All transportation modes, including bikeways, walkways, and public transportation, should be considered in the development of a transportation network. In addition to transportation modes that link us internally, transportation modes such as air, rail, and interstates provide external links. Transportation must also be considered part of the regional quality of life. The inclusion of other means of transportation alongside traditional road expansion and enhancement are a crucial part of a global community.

<i>INITIAL PROJECTS</i>	
Transportation Technology Innovation	\$12M
Dublin to Blacksburg Connector	\$32M
New Interchange at Falling Branch	\$50M
Rte. 114 Expansions	\$4.6M
Rte. 8 Expansions	\$130M
Rte. 100 Expansions	\$36M
Park & Ride Lots	\$750K
Bridge to New River Industrial Park	\$35M
Bikeways & Greenways Construction	\$20M

# NATURAL RESOURCES INITIATIVE



## INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Enhance Blue Ridge Parkway Opportunities:** Involves coordinating efforts to draw Blue Ridge Parkway tourists from the Parkway into local communities, as well as potential development of tourist facilities (such as a hotel in Floyd County).

**Maintain & Enhance Jefferson National Forest Opportunities:** Provides resources to capitalize on the tourism generated by the Jefferson National Forest.

**Enhance Appalachian Trail Opportunities:** Involves developing and marketing the links between the New River Valley and the Appalachian trail wherever appropriate.

**Complete the Huckleberry Trail:** Provides monies to complete the Huckleberry Trail.

**Complete the Long Way Home:** Provides monies to enhance the facilities for the Long Way Home.

**Bikeways and Greenways:** See **Transportation Initiative**.

## PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE

The natural environment is one of the New River Valley's most unique assets. Land use decisions should be in keeping with the high value that area residents place on the beauty and resources of the region. This is a vital component of our quality of life, and as such should be dealt with as a regional issue. Air and water do not obey jurisdictional boundaries, and a comprehensive approach must be taken to ensure the preservation of land and resources. The integration of recreation and other sustainable uses into economic development is another aspect of a global community, and must be included in the development of our regional economy.

### INITIAL PROJECTS

Enhance Blue Ridge Parkway Opportunities	\$4M
Maintain & Enhance Jefferson National Forest Opportunities	\$200K
Enhance Appalachian Trail Opportunities	\$100K
Complete the Huckleberry Trail	\$6M
Complete the Long Way Home	\$700K
Bikeways & Greenways Construction	\$20M

# CULTURAL INITIATIVE



## INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Public Library Computer Enhancements:** Provides money for all the regional libraries to be linked to the Internet as well as computerizing their card catalogs.

**Downtown Renovation, Preservation & Improvement Fund:** This provides funds to renovate, preserve and improve New River Valley downtown areas beyond the assistance provided by the Main Street program.

**Complete the Long Way Home:** See **Natural Resources Initiative**.

**Regional Marketing and Tourism Coordinator:** Provides the first year's salary for a full-time director and coordinator of all local festivals, fairs, and tourism efforts. This individual may also serve as the director of Hosts, the regional tourism group.

**Community Theater, Music and other Arts Groups:** Supports marketing and other efforts to promote and coordinate regional arts groups.

## PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE

The quality of life in the New River Valley is increasingly envied by those living in more urban areas, including companies who want to provide a high quality of life for their employees. Regional citizens should consider their cultural and natural resources as prized possessions to be protected. Awareness of the cultural opportunities that exist in the New River Valley is an important step in enhancing and developing these resources. Recognizing this area as the main corridor in the westward expansion of our nation is important to seeing our community in a national and global context. This rich heritage must be passed down to our children so that they feel the same pride of citizenship that their forbearers have.

<i>INITIAL PROJECTS</i>	
Public Library Computer Enhancements	\$1.2M
Downtown Renovation, Preservation & Improvement Fund	\$2M
Complete The Long Way Home	\$700K
Regional Marketing & Tourism Coordinator	\$50K
Community Theater, Music, and other Arts Groups	\$800K

# *TOURISM INITIATIVE*



## INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Enhancement of the Blue Ridge Parkway:** See Natural Resources Initiative.
- Establishment of Regional Visitors Center(s):** Provides monies to develop and support regional visitors centers across the New River Valley.
- Regional Marketing and Tourism Coordinator:** See Cultural Initiative.

## ***PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE***

The New River Valley has many attractions and events that are of interest to travellers. Up to this point, these resources have not been cooperatively marketed. Each part of the New River Valley has its unique features and events. Coordinating regional marketing and promotion will capitalize on the full potential of the region's assets. While hasty tourism development is not desirable, the beauty of the New River Valley is one of our strongest assets. Guarding this asset and developing it sustainably is an excellent means of economic development.

<i><b>INITIAL PROJECTS</b></i>	
Enhance Blue Ridge Parkway Opportunities	\$4M
Establishment of Regional Visitors Center(s)	\$500K
Regional Marketing & Tourism Coordinator	\$50K



# *HOUSING INITIATIVE*



## INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

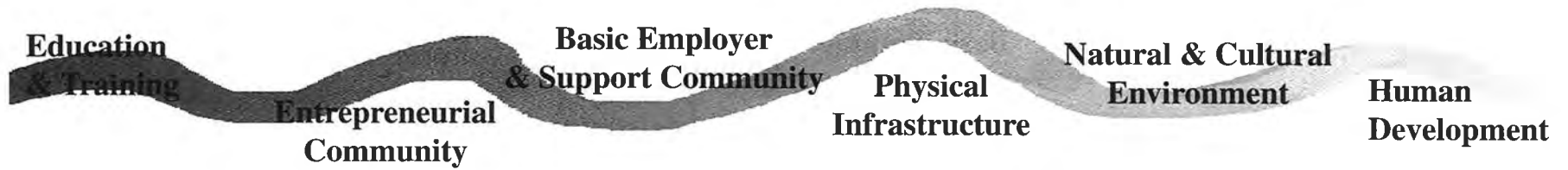
- Develop a Diverse Housing Stock:** Provides monies to ensure that a diverse housing stock is established.
- Expand Housing Opportunities:** Provides funding for the organization, development, and administration of additional housing opportunities, such as Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and village communities.
- Enhance Mortgage Assistance Programs:** Provides assistance in the form of low-interest loans, buy down options and other appropriate empowerment assistance.
- Coordinate Home Ownership Programs:** Work with existing organizations to enhance home ownership opportunities for regional citizens.

## *PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE*

A diverse housing stock is important for all members of society, from those who are in need of affordable homes to those able to finance higher-end accommodations. Affordable housing can and must include opportunities for home ownership. Making home ownership possible to as wide a range of residents as possible will ensure that the region has a diverse and committed citizenry. There is also a need for specialty housing such as assisted living facilities, and group homes for the elderly and disabled. Since the New River Valley functions as a region, housing development strategy should also be generated cooperatively among jurisdictions. A cooperative attitude will tell new and growing businesses that the New River Valley cares about its citizens and works to ensure their well-being.

<i>INITIAL PROJECTS</i>	
Develop a Diverse Housing Stock	\$*
Expand Housing Opportunities	\$5M
Enhance Mortgage Assistance Programs	\$25M
Coordinate Home Ownership Programs	\$500K
<small>*Due to the varying nature of the housing market, as well as fluctuations in supply and demand, estimates of this cost are virtually impossible to make.</small>	

# *HUMAN SERVICES INITIATIVE*



## INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Develop a One-Stop Shop for Human Services:** This will serve as an information clearinghouse about all the human services provided in the new River Valley.
- Develop Alternative Childcare Opportunities:** Includes development of alternative childcare facilities as well as assistance for small-scale childcare providers.
- Expand and Enhance E-911 Services:** Expands E-911 services throughout the New River Valley so that all areas are covered.
- Enhance Elder Care Services:** Involves developing alternative delivery methods for elder care services as well as expanding the range of elder care services offered.
- Enhance Hospice Services:** Allows for the expansion of the hospice services offered as well as the areas serviced.

## *PURSUIT OF THE POSSIBLE*

Human services are crucial to developing an effective workforce and a global community. This link to economic development is clear when considering how vital employees are to a company. All people in the region need to have a support system of human services. Providing adequate support will allow the New River Valley to be renowned as a community that cares for its people and, in turn, is home to a loyal, dependable, high-quality workforce. Providing maximum services to those in need will ultimately bolster the entire region, as educated, healthy citizens are active labor force and community participants.

<i>INITIAL PROJECTS</i>	
Develop a One-Stop Shop for Human Services	\$200K
Develop Alternative Childcare Opportunities	\$1M
Expand and Enhance E-911 Services	\$1.2M
Enhance Elder Care Services	\$2M
Enhance Hospice Services	\$1M

## CONCLUSIONS

The New River Valley has been significantly impacted by the downturn in the national and state economy. Defense downsizing has had a large impact on the region and the unemployment numbers of this region show the effects of this major industrial shift. In response to these impacts and industrial changes, the region came together as a single community to determine the best course of action for its citizens.

This regional effort has laid the groundwork of New River Valley Vision 2020. The visions, goals, and objectives that form the basis of this strategy are built upon the current strengths of the New River Valley and citizens' goals for future growth and development. Vision 2020 is a basis for long-term investment and commitment to an overall adjustment strategy for the New River Valley that is challenging, sustainable, and driven by the local citizens that forged it.

These integrated key areas form the backbone of Vision 2020. If they are implemented successfully, the New River Valley will become a globally competitive region of the highest quality. This is a regional effort, and cooperation is crucial.

The large number of New River Valley citizens who live in one jurisdiction and work in another indicates that the New River Valley already functions as a region rather than as a group of localities connected only by a political boundary. The connections between the economies, culture, and natural environment of the jurisdictions have long tied this region together with strong bonds of shared interests and needs. This is reinforced by the region's rural nature, which requires sustained broad-based participation of all citizens of the region to achieve regional goals and missions. This cooperation is necessitated by the fact the New River Valley does not have an intimate core of philanthropists driving development and regional activity.

National and international leaders increasingly regard regions, rather than states or localities, as the competitive units of the future. More and more often, the federal government is awarding federal dollars to defined regions. Working as a region to implement Vision 2020 is a logical step, and will allow the New River Valley to be an extremely competitive player in the coming global economy.

Local businesses, community and government leaders, and citizens will have to make a wholehearted effort to implement Vision 2020 as they have created it. If, after reading the overview and the project maps, you would like to champion a project in a Vision key area, or assist another champion, please call the New River Valley Planning District Commission at (703) 639-9313 and we will provide you with background information and key contacts for the project(s) of interest.